

Mozes Katz With His Son Vladimir Katz At The Synagogue



I am sitting on the left in the synagogue in Khust. Standing on the right is my younger son Vladimir. This photo was taken in Khust in 2003.

When Ukraine gained independence after the breakup of the USSR in 1991, Jews got an opportunity to be Jews in the full meaning of this word. I think there is no state anti-Semitism at present or, at least, there is almost none. At least, I haven't heard of refusal in admission or employment because someone is a Jew.

There is Hesed that provides big assistance to old people and single mothers. After Hesed opened in Subcarpathia in 1999 my son went to work there as curator of Khust district.

There are not many Jews left. Many emigrated to USA, Israel and Germany. Now there are mostly mixed families: Jewish men married to non-Jewish women and vice versa. Few people go to the synagogue now. There are not enough even for a minyan at times. People don't want to come to the synagogue, even though there are no bans. Young people don't need it, at least, the majority of young people. I go to the synagogue on Saturday and Jewish holidays and pray at home. I place tefillin on my hand and head like they taught me when I was a child and pray.

In the past it was forbidden to do any work on Saturday after the candles were lit. If somebody violated Saturday rules it was a disgrace, he felt ashamed of coming to the synagogue and look into other people's eyes. And now a man coming from the synagogue has a case in his hands and money in his pocket. He would pay his fee in a bus, go to the market or a store as if it should be this way.

They do not follow the rules as required. And it doesn't occur to people that they cannot be hurting God for too long, nobody thinks that two temples in Jerusalem were destroyed on the same day, 9th Av, in different years. Why did it happen - because they didn't follow the laws and now God will punish those who abandoned his faith and don't want to live like God tells us.